

RADICAL CHRONICLE

RSS Information Notice

Spring 1998

Posting Requirements

According to the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) regulations, the following documents must be posted at locations that receive, possess, use or transfer material licensed by the NRC:

1. Title 10 Parts 19 and 20
2. The license and license conditions
3. NRC Form 3 "Notice to Employees"
4. Title II of the Energy Reorganization Act of 1974

These documents should be posted in conspicuous places in a sufficient number of places to permit individuals engaged in licensed activities to observe them on the way to or from any particular licensed activity location. If the posting of documents #1 and #2 is not practical, the location may post a notice that describes the documents and states where they may be examined. This would be the case at locations where there are multiple laboratories and the Location Radiation Protection Officer (LRPO) maintains these documents. A copy of document #4 can be found in the back of the Radiation Safety Handbook.

Table of Contents

Posting Requirements.....	1
Inspections Performed this Quarter.....	1
Violations Cited this Quarter.....	1
Tentative Inspection Schedule.....	2
Exit Signs Cause Contamination at FS.....	2
NRC Inspections of USDA Facilities.....	2
New Quarterly Survey Form.....	3
Final Disposition for Forest Service Gauges.....	3
How to Reach Us.....	4

Inspections Performed this Quarter

APHIS

Oakland, CA
Gulfport, MS

FS

Hot Springs, AR
Flagstaff, AZ
Clovis, CA
Albuquerque, NM

ARS

Shafter, CA
Fresno, CA
Houma, LA
Mississippi State, MS
Clay Center, NE
Wapato, WA

NRCS

Hope, AR
Jonesboro, AR
Monticello, AR
Waldron, AR
Hollister, CA
Hays, KS
Horton, KS
Strong City, KS

Violations Cited This Quarter

- ✓ Nuclear gauges transported without proper labeling (incorrect units) and shipping papers
- ✓ Transporting radioactive material (nuclear gauges) without proper labeling and shipping papers
- ✓ Exposing the source rod while performing leak tests
- ✓ Failure to receive DOT (HAZMAT) training every 3 years
- ✓ Storing radioactive material in a location not approved by RSS
- ✓ Failure to lock the source rod on a nuclear gauge during transport and storage

- ✓ Failure to perform surveys at the required frequency

Tentative Inspection Schedule

(June-August)

ARS

Phoenix, AZ
Ames, IA
Peoria, IL
Beltsville, MD
Frederick, MD
Brookings, SD
Prosser, WA

NRCS

Sioux City, IA
Council Bluffs, IA
Conrad, MT
Pierce, NE
Casper, WY

FS

Placerville, CA
Quincy, CA
Redding, CA
Sonoma, CA
Fort Collins, CO
Missoula, MT
Rapid City, SD

APHIS

Baltimore, MD
Phoenix, AZ

“Exit” signs cause contamination at Forest Service Location

On March 27, the RSS received a call from the NRC, Region II in Atlanta, Georgia, informing us of an incident involving exit signs containing tritium (^3H) at the Forest Service location in Franklin, North Carolina.

This location operates the Lynden B. Johnson Civilian Conservation Center in cooperation with the Department of Labor. The dormitories where students stay during their training have had exit signs installed that contain approximately 20 curies of tritium. The decision to use these signs was made because this region experiences several power outages that last several hours or days. Tritium has a half-life of approximately 12 years. These signs had gone through at least one half-life and were being replaced.

The person replacing these signs indicated to one of the students who was assisting him that the signs contained radioactive gas and that the old signs had to be returned to the manufacturer. It was at this time that the student informed the management at the facility that five students had taken some tubes from one of the old signs that had been removed and had been handling them for a couple weeks.

The State of North Carolina was contacted by the Forest Service who then contacted the NRC because the Forest Service is under Federal jurisdiction. This Forest Service location does not have any permit holders that use radioactive material.

The Radiological Emergency Assistance Center/Training Site (REAC/TS) from Oak Ridge, Tennessee was dispatched by NRC to the location. Urine samples from five individuals were taken and analyzed. Results of the urinalyses indicated exposures to be less than 50 millirem to each of the individuals that handled the tubes.

New World Technologies was contacted by RSS to go to the location and decontaminate the area in the dormitory where contamination was detected after surveying the building.

The cost of the decontamination of the facility, excluding waste disposal, was approximately \$17,000. The radioactive waste generated during the cleanup cannot be disposed of because the State of North Carolina is in violation of the Low Level Radioactive Waste Policy Act.

NRC Inspections of USDA Facilities

The U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) inspects USDA annually. NRC inspectors from Region I of the NRC inspect RSS's records. The USDA's Radioactive Material License is issued by the Region I office.

The USDA's license includes several locations in the United States (approximately 155). Some located in other NRC regions. The NRC has four regions. Region I makes requests to the other NRC regions of NRC to inspect USDA facilities in their areas. These inspections occur throughout the year.

IF AN NRC INSPECTOR SHOWS UP AT YOUR LOCATION, PLEASE CALL US! We can to assist you if you get inspected. We also want to know if any violations are cited by the NRC inspector. If violations are cited at your location you will need to respond to us in writing, informing us of the actions you plan to take to correct the violation. It is best to address violations during the inspection while the inspector is still at your facility.

The NRC inspector is not required to inform us of the inspection. He/She only reports his/her findings to Region I. It may be several weeks, even months before

we are aware that a location has been inspected by the NRC.

New Quarterly Survey Form

The Quarterly Survey report forms for the second quarter were recently mailed to isotope permit holders. As you have probably noticed, the forms have been changed.

Room changes can no longer be made on these forms. All room changes should be in the form of a permit amendment request. Any changes written in either adding rooms or deleting rooms could be considered a violation. If you add a room to the form that may indicate that you worked with radioactive material in a location without receiving prior approval from RSS and if you do not perform survey for a room that is listed on the form that may also be a violation of USDA's NRC license. If the rooms listed on your permit are not correct, you need to contact us immediately. No rooms will be removed from a permit without a "close-out" survey. This is the only way we can document that the room does not have radioactive contamination. If you are not sure how to perform a close-out survey, contact your LRPO or RSS Health Physicist.

If there are multiple Permit Holders using one room, only one Permit Holder is responsible for submitting a copy of a survey for the Quarterly Survey Report. (The Permit Holder who is responsible for submitting the survey will have that room on their RSS-100 form.) If multiple isotopes are used in the room results for each of these isotopes need to be documented.

Areas where radioactive material is stored, including waste storage areas, are required to be surveyed at least monthly.

If your permit request to change a room has been submitted after the quarterly survey was mailed, send a copy of your close-out survey performed or a copy of your request to add the room with the quarterly survey.

No other forms will be accepted. Do not use previous versions of the RSS-100.

Note: The fax number on the survey form is incorrect. Our fax number is (301) 734-5050. This will be corrected by the next quarterly survey mailing.

Final Disposition for Forest Service Gauges

In the early 1990s the Forest Service transferred 111 nuclear gauges containing Cs-137, Am-241, and Ra-226, to Corcoron Enterprises, Inc., which was licensed by the State of Washington. Corcoron Enterprises' charges for disposal of the nuclear gauges was slightly lower than the manufacture's charges. Corcoron Enterprises, Inc. was then reorganized as Nuclear Support Services.

On November 10, 1994, the State of Washington sent a letter to RSS instructing them to discontinue shipping nuclear gauges to Corcoron Enterprises, Inc. and Nuclear Support Services.

A short time later, Nuclear Support Services went out of business and abandoned 26 of the Forest Service's gauges in a warehouse in Tacoma, Washington.

The State of Washington took possession of the gauges, transferred them to a State operated storage facility and requested that the USDA retrieve the gauges.

The USDA Radiation Safety Committee and the Forest Service concluded that it would be in the best interest of public health and safety as well as the best interests of the Forest Service, to retrieve the gauges. The Forest Service subsequently allocated funds to dispose of the gauges.

The RSS negotiated contracts with Troxler Electronics, Inc., and Campbell Pacific Nuclear to dispose of the gauges.

In March of this year, Dan Sharp of RSS went to Olympia and together with a representative of the State of Washington and a representative from CPN, leak tested and packaged the gauges for transfer to the respective manufacturers.

How to Contact Us

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